

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) An oscillating disc cutter including a cutting disc and a drive mechanism, the drive mechanism including a drive shaft to effect eccentric oscillation of the cutting disc and a radial bearing disposed to permit relative rotation between the drive shaft and the cutting disc, the cutter further including a first axial bearing disposed to react axial forces while accommodating induced rotation of the cutting disc when operatively engaged and to induce a rotational drag thereby limiting rotational speed of the cutting disc when free running.

2. (Original) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 further including a second bearing to induce a predetermined axial load in the first bearing.

3. (Original) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 2 wherein the second bearing substantially reacts the axial forces induced by the first bearing.

4. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 2 wherein the first bearing is of relatively higher friction, and the second bearing is of relatively lower friction.

5. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 2 wherein the first bearing is a hydrostatic bearing.

6. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 2 wherein the second bearing is a fluid lubricated bearing.

7. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 5 wherein the hydrostatic bearing substantially reacts the axial cutting forces in the operative cutting mode.

8. (Original) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 7 wherein the hydrostatic bearing is oil operated.

9. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 8 wherein the second bearing is a pressurized fluid lubricated bearing.

10. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 9 wherein pressure in the fluid lubricated bearing is maintained at a level such that a predetermined maximum running clearance in the hydrostatic bearing is maintained thereby inducing shear forces in the oil of the hydrostatic bearing.

11. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 10 wherein the shear forces cause rotational drag in the bearing thereby limiting the rotational speed of the cutting disc when free running.

12. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 9 wherein the fluid lubricated bearing is pressurized with water.

13. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 12 wherein the fluid lubricated bearing is takes the form of a water-pressurized annulus.

14. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein the limited rotational speed of the cutting disc when free running is 0 to 1500 rpm.

15. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein the limited rotational speed of the cutting disc when free running is 0 to 750 rpm.

16. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein the limited rotational speed of the cutting disc when free running is 0 to 100 rpm.

17. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein the cutting disc is maintained at rotational speed that is lower than a speed of said drive shaft, even if there is no cutting load on the cutting disc.

18. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein said rotational drag is predetermined in magnitude.

19. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 18 wherein said rotational drag is controllable.

20. (Previously Presented) An oscillating disc cutter according to claim 1 wherein said rotational drag is controllable.